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Think Piece: The King of Spain's Daughter

While reading *The King of Spain's Daughter* by Teresa Deevy, I was flabbergasted by how Annie is treated. Throughout the play, she receives a number of abuses directly and indirectly. She seems to be receiving abuse from all sides, and I believe the portrayal of these abuses are done purposely by Deevy to spread awareness about abuse to women, and how this negative treatment of women is wrong.

One of the things that shocked me most was that the other characters believed she deserved what she got instead of recognizing that her father, Peter, who was physically abusing her, was the problem. Mrs. Marks paints Annie as a trollop saying, "That Annie Kinsella will be romancin' all her life with whoever she can" (46). Mrs. Marks believes, for reasons such as this, that Annie "earns what she gets"(46). Jim, who wants Annie to be his wife, even blames Annie for the fury she invokes in her father. He says to Annie, "'Tis a shame you'd madden him. He'll harm you some day, and all your own fault. You won't have any life left. An' what can I do?" (51). Annie is constantly being victim-blamed in this play, but it is her father who should receive the blame for the physical abuse he inflicts on her.

Annie is also made to seem like an object to be had. Both Jim and Peter are trying to lay claim to Annie as if she is a piece of furniture. After Annie arrives with her angry father's dinner, Jim says to Peter, who is obviously agitated, "You have your dinner now, can't you leave her alone?" to which Peter responds, "Do she belong to you...Do she? When she do you can talk" (49). Like in this quote, Annie is referred to as a commodity to be had throughout the play. Annie is given no choice but to be at the will of these men who are trying to own her. Even Jim who "loves" her wants to capitalize on Annie's problems with her father so she can be with him, belong to him. He even asks Peter "how can [he] force the girl" to marry him (45). Annie is treated similarly throughout the play. She is reduced to a subservient, commodified woman.

I think that Teresa Deevy purposely shows this negative treatment of women to awaken her audience to the many abuses women receive. I think this is interesting because this play opened in 1935, but, yet, this is still a prominent issue today. Women face many of the same abuses. Women today still face slut-shaming (like what Mrs. Marks does to Annie), domestic abuse, objectification, victim-blaming, commodification, etc. Women were/are constantly receiving terrible treatment from family members, men who supposedly love them, and even from other women. The list of abuses done to women is endless and the list of people who have abused women is just as long. However, I think taking steps, even ones like spreading awareness like Teresa Deevy does, will hopefully rectify this horrendous issue.